

Goethean Lit. Society

AN

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

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OF

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Goethean Lit. Society

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Exhibit A

Exhibit B

INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

There is a propriety in the demand, which custom makes on me, for some expression of my sentiments on the subject of Education. Should the future progress of the young institution, whose anniversary we this day celebrate, at all correspond with its past experience, and its present flattering prospects, the character and views of its Faculty will become every year objects of increasing interest to an extensive region of country, and especially to that church from whose patronage it expects success. If the Professorships in our Colleges are stations of so much influence and importance, that the Directors of these seminaries of learning have a right to invade the ranks of the sacred ministry, and for their benefit to diminish the number of settled pastors, it is certainly desirable that the public should be acquainted with the principles and feelings of the men thus selected.

It might perhaps be expected that I should confine myself, in what I have to say, to that particular department in which it is my duty to give instruction. But whatever may be the interest, or even enthusiasm, felt by me in the studies to which I have devoted myself, it is not solely, nor even chiefly, on account of my love for these pursuits, that I have engaged in my present

occupation. Were these studies separated from their connection with the intellectual and moral character of the young men who are to be trained up in them, and from their relation to the civil and religious institutions of our country, I should by no means feel myself justified in consecrating my life to them. For what Christian, especially what Christian Minister, can think of spending his Master's time in a life of literary self-gratification, without reference to the welfare of his fellow men ? It is not as a scholar only, but chiefly as a philanthropist, and a Christian, that I address you. I trust, therefore, that I shall be pardoned, if I defer to some other occasion the discussion of any one branch of science, and take at present a broader and more comprehensive view of the great subject of Education.

The people of Pennsylvania have recently evinced an increased conviction of the necessity of taking efficient measures for the education of youth. Appropriations have been made to Colleges, Academies, and Female Seminaries ; a system of common schools has been devised ; and taxes on property have been levied for the maintenance of public instruction. Of the merits or defects of the plan of education which has been adopted in this State, I have nothing to say ; for I am not yet sufficiently acquainted with its details to speak with confidence of its character, or its probable results. But nothing can be more obvious than that, at such a time, the diffusion through the community of sound principles, in regard to intellectual and moral culture, is a matter of the highest import. A miscalcu-

lation, in respect to the influence of any scheme of education on society, will be followed by ruinous results ; for the whole subject is vital to the interests of the State.

What then are the opinions held and acted on, in this country, in regard to the connection of intellectual education with the maintenance of civil liberty ? When the means of perpetuating free institutions are made the subject of debate, and the question is asked, ‘Is there any thing that will secure to posterity the blessings of freedom ?’ what is the uniform answer ? What thought occupies the public mind ? What principle is made the main spring of action ? Is not the almost invariable answer, ‘*General intelligence ?*’ Does not the *summum bonum* of the statesman and patriot seem to be, *the universal diffusion of knowledge ?* The doctrine has been advanced, and taught from a certain school book to the youth of a large section of our country, that knowledge diffused among any people is a sufficient basis for free institutions, without regard to the question whether that people are moral and religious, or not. The proof offered is, that men will naturally do that which is for their true interests, if they only have education enough to know what these interests are.

There is a modification of this theory prevailing in the country, which is more extensively advocated, and supported by higher authority. It is this. Knowledge and virtue are both necessary to the stability of free institutions. But the diffusion of knowledge, that is,

intellectual education, is the great thing to be aimed at, because *that* will secure the existence of virtue. It will bring morality along with it. This sentiment is defended in an Address, delivered before the Students of Amherst College, by Governor Everett of Massachusetts. "If," he says, "as I doubt not, France is at this time more virtuous (notwithstanding the demoralizing effects of the Revolution, and its wars) than at any former period, it is owing to the diffusion of knowledge, which has followed the subversion of feudalism, and the regeneration of the provinces." "The reformation of France is rapidly going on in the elevation of the intellectual, and with it the political, social, and moral character of the people." Again he says, "The diffusion of knowledge is not merely favorable to religion and morals, but, in the last and highest analysis, they cannot be separated from each other. There can be no real knowledge of truth, which does not tend to purify and elevate the affections. A little knowledge,—much knowledge—may not, in individual cases, subdue the passions of a cold, corrupt, and selfish heart. But if knowledge will not do it, can it be done by the want of knowledge?"

The doctrine of these extracts is, that intellectual education—the spread of knowledge among the people—is that on which we must depend for the preservation of good order in society, and the security of all our rights.

We have in this state a splendid exemplification of the same scheme. I mean Girard College. Since re-

igion is to be excluded from that institution, in what way did the man who endowed it with such princely munificence suppose that it is to benefit the community, except by cultivating the intellects of the youth for whose education it was designed? Nor does Girard College stand alone in our country, in its exclusion of religious and moral influence from education. There has long been manifested in all parts of the land a disposition to separate the government from the Christian religion. Because we cannot all agree in one particular form of religion, we will declare ourselves independent of all religion, and even make open war upon piety as a dangerous enemy to the state. It appears from the First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the State of Massachusetts, that, of the great number of books in use in the schools of that state, only *three* are designed to teach even the plainest principles of morality and natural theology, while the doctrines of revealed religion are wholly excluded, for fear of favoring some particular sect. Moreover, the three books which do treat of the subject of morality are in use in only six schools out of two thousand nine hundred and eighteen.

Looking at the facts just stated, and others like them, it is evident to me that there is on the public mind an erroneous impression, and in the public practice a dangerous mistake, in regard to the efficacy of knowledge when separated from religion. Its power is greatly overrated. It is trusted to for results, which, if the Bible view of human nature is the true view, or if the

testimony of history may be appealed to, it certainly never will secure. This error of opinion ought to be corrected. This fault of practice ought to be amended ; for the tendencies of both are ruinous. By their means the public eye is turned away from the true and only source of national prosperity, and that principle, whose assiduous cultivation can alone secure public happiness, is neglected. I mean the moral principle, the conscience, the religious sentiment of man. Our systems of education are to a great extent misdirected.— They do not accomplish the legitimate object of education. With here and there a happy exception, the same error reigns throughout. Intellect is every thing,—all things else are nothing. In all our common schools, instruction is imparted, but in most of them moral culture, if attended to at all, is a mere thing of accident—a subject by the by. And from many of them, (as we have just seen) it is studiously thrust out, as a forbidden thing, a doubtful and dangerous affair. As though no pains were needed to preserve and purify the very life blood of the State ! In many of our higher seminaries, intellect is absolutely deified. Teachers and taught, parents and children, clergy and laity, all bow down and worship the golden image. But the cultivation of the intellect only, is not the legitimate object of education. That object should be, the inculcation of virtuous principles, and the formation of virtuous habits ; and whatever increase of power education may bring to individuals, it is of no real advantage to the State any further than it accomplishes this

end. Aside from this, it contributes nothing to the permanence of public prosperity, but rather the reverse ; since the new power acquired by mere intellectual discipline is sure to be abused. If a system of education whose whole object is to cultivate the intellect is a public benefit, it is a benefit because it accomplishes something at which it does not aim. It is a benefit because something else secures the end, which it should have been its own peculiar province to attain.

There are those (and their opinions have been cited) who confidently expect that the rapid and universal diffusion of knowledge through the world, will batter down the fortresses of despotism, secure to men their inalienable rights, and establish in all the earth the free and happy reign of liberty and reason. Vain, delusive hope ! God has determined that men shall not thus find rest. While their evil passions remain ungoverned, their appetites unrestrained, and selfishness reigns within, no stable benefit can be secured. One specific form of despotism may be overthrown, but a worse evil will speedily befall them. If ignorant, they will be oppressed ; if possessed of the power which knowledge gives, they will by turns oppress each other, and all the gain an increase of knowledge will secure, will be an addition to the number of their tyrants.

The proposition which expresses my view of the relation of intellectual cultivation to the stability of free institutions is this :

B

**EDUCATION SEPARATED FROM RELIGION FURNISHES
NO SECURITY TO MORALITY AND FREEDOM.**

The truth of this position may be established by arguments from three sources : from the sacred scriptures ; from the nature of man ; and from history.—Omitting the first two sources of proof, I propose at the present time to appeal only to the testimony of facts.—“I have but one lamp,” says Patrick Henry, “by which my feet are guided—the lamp of experience.”—What then is the testimony of history, in regard to the relation of education and religion to morality and freedom ? Our illustrations must be drawn from nations which have enjoyed to some extent the blessings of free institutions. And the first I will mention is Athens.

In the Athenian people we have a striking instance of the insufficiency of intellectual cultivation to sustain morality, and give permanence to free institutions.—Athens was the eye of Greece. A system of education, which, so far as the intellect is concerned, was almost perfect ; libraries well supplied with books ; lectures delivered to the people on the various branches of science by men whose memories are immortal ; schools of philosophy more famous than any other that have existed ; a form of government the most popular the world has ever seen ;—these were advantages, intellectual and civil, as great as it is possible for any nation, without the Bible, and the art of printing, to possess. Knowledge was not confined at Athens to a few philosophers. The Athenian system of education embraced in its am-

ple requisitions the whole circle of human science.— Reading, writing, pronunciation, grammar, arithmetic, geography, geometry, astronomy, logic, rhetoric, ethics, history, the laws, politics, design, in a word, every subject of which the ancients had any knowledge, engaged the attention of the Athenian youth.— In their schools for children, opened at the rising of the sun and closed only with the departing day, were received the first lessons of that wisdom after which the Greeks sought, and there were laid the foundations of that immortality which they acquired. When the youth of Athens had made a certain proficiency in their studies, the celebration of a public festival testified the interest, which the whole republic felt in an event auspicious to the welfare of the state. And not only were the Athenian youth thus aided and encouraged in the pursuit of knowledge, but they had before their eyes the most illustrious examples of intellectual greatness. They were surrounded on all sides by the retreats of the philosophers. The unequalled reputation of the Athenian teachers, together with the cheapness of education at Athens, drew together, at the seats of genius and learning which were to be found there, a crowd of strangers from every civilized country on the globe.— It was to Athens that Cicero sent his son to be educated, as was common among the distinguished Romans of his time.

The studies of the Athenian youth were not finished, till at the age of twenty, having received each a suit of armor from the state, they were permitted to

apply themselves to any art or science, which they might select. Admitted at length, as these young men were, to share in a government which recognized no distinctions but those of character and property, and whose subjects in person decided on peace and war, received ambassadors, and discharged all the important duties of the state ; mingling with the twenty thousand citizens of Athens, who, according to Demosthenes, “Never cease to frequent the Forum, occupied either with their own affairs or with those of the state,” and of whom there was no one that might not aspire to the highest office in the republic ; assembled for public business, even in ordinary circumstances, at least four times every thirty-six days ; invited by the proclamation of the herald, “Let every one, who can give useful counsel to his country ascend the rostrum ;” and aware of the sovereign sway with which the statesman or the demagogue controlled the councils of the nation ; was it possible that a people possessing such advantages for education, and urged on by such a stimulus to ambition, could be ignorant ?

In Cicero’s Oration for Flaccus, is to be found a handsome tribute to the intellectual superiority of the Athenians. “There are present,” he says, “*Athenians*, from whom civilization, learning, religion, agriculture, rights, laws, are thought to have originated, and been spread abroad through all the earth ; respecting the possession of whose city, on account of its beauty, a contest is related to have arisen among the gods—a city whose antiquity is so great that it is said

to have produced its citizens out of itself, and whose authority is so commanding that the now tarnished and well nigh ruined reputation of Greece depends upon the splendor of its name."

If, then, learning and science and general intelligence can make a nation virtuous, and secure public happiness, what a pattern of morality, good order, and rational liberty, may we expect such a people as the Athenians, to have set for the benefit of their fellow-men. Yet this is the people of whom the same orator declares, *that they only knew what was right, but would not do it.* All this light was united with the most destructive immoralities. Gaming was with them an insane and uncontrollable passion. Drunkenness prevailed to such a degree that Plato says they were accustomed to see the whole city intoxicated at the festivals. Licentiousness, too, reigned to an almost unparalleled extent. These and other vices ate out the heart of national morality, and consequently rendered the government unstable, and destroyed public happiness. In the heroic ages, when there was the least knowledge, there was also the least vice. And as Athens advanced towards the summit of her greatness, if knowledge and refinement were increased, crime also increased with them.

Besides the testimony of Polybius, who says there existed in Greece scarcely the shadow of good faith, in the same oration of Cicero, from which I have just extracted such a compliment to the genius and learning of the Athenians, there is an express declaration that neither the word nor oath of a Greek was at all to be

relied on. “Nevertheless,” he says, “I say this concerning the whole race of Greeks. I ascribe to them literature, I grant them skill in many arts, I do not deny them elegance of style, quickness of parts, copiousness of speech ; in fine, if they claim for themselves any other *intellectual* qualities, I do not object. But the religious observance of an oath, and good faith, that nation never cultivated. To the binding force, the authority, the importance of this whole transaction, they are entirely insensible.”

This assertion was true. Wretches might be found, who would perjure themselves a hundred times a day, without fear or remorse. To aid another in his cause with such testimony as would best answer his purpose, was even considered as one of the dues of friendship.—In such a state of society, could justice be impartially administered ? Of what importance was the particular form which government might assume among such a people ? Where intemperance, licentiousness, and contempt of good faith abound, of what avail to national happiness are the refinements of art, and the general diffusion of knowledge ? *Religion*, and not knowledge, is the foundation of virtue. It was the corruption of religion, and not the want of intellectual cultivation, that destroyed the morals of the Athenians. What security to morality could be expected from religion, when, instead of holding up to view a system of ethics to act on the public mind, she hid beneath her robes a bundle of mysteries that would not bear the light, and when, in place of the duties of public and private life, she enforced

only the observance of frivolous and indecent rites? It was but feeble aid that public virtue could receive from a religion, which exhibited to the worship of adoring multitudes a promiscuous assemblage of gods, infamous for the immoralities of their lives, and goddesses, beautiful indeed, but scarcely less licentious than the courtesans themselves. It was the abuse, and not the want of knowledge, that corrupted the morals of the Athenians, and thereby undermined the foundations on which alone free institutions can stand.

The poet Anacreon, it has been observed, was more an Epicurean than Epicurus himself. When, in the banquet halls of Greece, his licentious songs were joined with the maddening wine of the islands; when music, poetry, love, and inebriation, asserted their united empire over the excited passions; when the doctrines of the pleasure-loving sophists were urged upon the youth, and eagerly adopted into their creed; when the Asiatic refinements of the school of Aspasia, and the luxuries that accompany extensive foreign commerce, flowed in upon the nation—what was there to oppose this flood of immorality? The purifying influence of knowledge? The restraining power of philosophy? Instead of its being true, that knowledge and philosophy were able to withstand the inroads of corruption, they were themselves made the ministers of vice. “No sooner,” says Cicero, “did any one utter any base saying, than presently he found the same thing had been said by some one of the philosophers.” Moreover he declares, that of all these philosophers he never knew

one who cured his disciples of their vices. It was not the common people only, the less refined among the Athenians, who, for want of knowledge, gave themselves up to immorality. Their captains in sin were philosophers and statesmen, orators and generals, whose names, after the lapse of two thousand years, are in the mouth of every child. Themistocles, Aristides, Pericles, Alcibiades, and others—men, with minds disciplined by scientific studies, refined by an intimate acquaintance with the arts, and enriched with stores of various knowledge collected from every quarter of the globe—these were the men, whose dissolute examples led on the nation to unbridled license, and every species of crime. With such patterns before them, it is not strange, that, even in the midst of a general diffusion of knowledge, and in the face of the instructions which the sublimest productions of human genius had provided for the regulation of their lives, the young men of Athens overthrew the statues of the gods, and demolished the Hermæ in the corners of the streets and in the public squares ; inscribed, as they were, with those lessons of wisdom, which veneration for antiquity, and reverence for the hallowed reputation of their immortal ancestors should have rendered sacred in their eyes.

“Athens fell,” says Montesquieu, “because her faults appeared to her so pleasant, that she was unwilling to cure them.” But, however pleasant to the heart of man may be such errors as have been pointed out, if the remark of the same writer is correct, that “More states

have been ruined by violations of morality, than by violation of the laws," we are at no loss to account for the result.

When it is asked what reason there is to believe that our institutions will prove more stable than those of the free republics of antiquity, it is common for those who rely on the promotion of intelligence among the people, as the foundation of civil liberty, to reply that knowledge among the ancients was confined to a few, while the mass of the people remained in ignorance. We, it is imagined, have found out a sovereign panacea for all national disorders. In the diffusion of knowledge among the people, we have discovered the true elixir vitæ of republics.

I have stated some facts in the history of Athens to show that knowledge, instead of being the privilege of a few, was widely diffused among the inhabitants of that polished city. I have shown that the Athenian intellect was cultivated by schools for children, schools for youth, schools of philosophy, and schools of the arts ; all of which, as they were not sanctified by a pure religion, became in the end nothing but schools of vice, and furnished no security to morality and freedom. I now appeal to the history of Rome, the noblest and most powerful of all Republics.

The character of the early Romans was almost the very opposite of that of the Greeks, and altogether diverse from the refined degeneracy of the modern Italians. Stern integrity, incorruptible love of justice, simplicity of life, and sincerity of manners—these are

the qualities which we admire in the ancestors of Rome. "In peace and war," says Sallust, "they cultivated good morals. Great harmony prevailed, but no avarice. Right and duty were regarded, not so much on account of the laws, as from natural impulse. Discord and dissimulation found a place only against enemies ; citizens strove with citizens only in virtue. Magnificence prevailed in the sacrifices to the gods, frugality in domestic affairs, and fidelity towards friends."

In the 8th chapter of the first book of Maccabees, may be found an eulogium on the morality, and especially the fidelity of the old Romans. The Roman Senate was the refuge of nations, the arbitrator of causes, the dispenser of justice, the avenger of wrongs, and the deliverer of the oppressed. "The Holy Spirit," says Bossuet, "has not disdained to praise, in the book of Maccabees, the distinguished prudence, and vigorous counsels of this wise assembly, in which no one arrogated to himself an authority not warranted by reason, and all whose members labored for the public good without partiality, and without jealousy."— Though we Protestants do not agree with this Catholic bishop respecting the inspiration of the books of Maccabees, yet we are willing to admit that the praise of the Romans which is there recorded was deserved.

The tragical story of Lucretia shows us clearly what were the early Roman ideas of conjugal fidelity. Matrons enjoyed peculiar honor. According to Plutarch, it was two hundred and thirty years before a divorce occurred at Rome. Other writers say five hundred

and twenty. These were the days of integrity and patriotism ; these were the times of the Cincinnati, the Camilli, the Fabii, the Fabricii, the Reguli.

Among the virtues which contributed to the prevalence of morality among the early Romans, none was more important than that sacred regard for the preservation of public and private faith, especially for the solemn obligations of an oath, for which that people were distinguished. Its salutary influence was felt in all the relations of private life, and in all the affairs of the state. If time would permit, I might adduce a multitude of examples in which sometimes individuals, sometimes the whole Roman people, exhibited a singular regard for the sanctity of an oath. Even amidst all the corruptions of later ages, the Emperor Maximus calls the oath “The sacred mystery of the Roman government.”

If we wish for any further testimony to the excellent character of the early Romans, we have that of the historian Polybius. “Such,” he says, “is the impulse to noble deeds, and the virtuous emulation which are produced in the minds of the youth by the institutions that exist among them.” “Moreover, in regard to the acquisition of wealth, the manners and customs of the Romans are superior to those of the Carthaginians.—For with the latter, nothing is base, provided it is likely to be attended with gain ; whereas in the estimation of the former, nothing is more disgraceful than to receive a bribe, or to acquire property by unfair means. While they esteem wealth an honor to him who ob-

tains it in a proper way, they consider gain secured by unlawful practices as a reproach. This is proved by the fact that among the Carthaginians, offices are obtained by the unconcealed use of bribes, while among the Romans, the penalty for this is death."

Let us now inquire what gave to the Roman virtue that strength and vigor, whose rugged features every where appear during the days of their prosperity.—Was it the diffusion of knowledge? What is the idea which the very term Old Roman suggests? Certainly not that of intellectual cultivation. It is of moral principle, not of a fund of knowledge, that we think. In those periods of the Roman history when the people were most virtuous, they were not instructed even in the rudiments of science. The Romans were originally not at all distinguished for the love of learning. The virtuous habits of this noble people were established, and the foundations of their immense empire laid, long before any considerable amount of knowledge existed in the nation. It was not to science, but to religion, that they were indebted for their moral greatness, and their political supremacy. The national character was formed by the institutions of Numa. In common with some other legislators, this prince laid claim to inspiration, by which means he secured for his laws the sanction of divine authority. His institutions are distinguished above all others (if we except those of Moses) for their strong moral and religious tendency. From a passage in Plutarch, it would seem that he taught the Romans the adoration

of an invisible, immaterial spirit, that he insisted on the observance of holy time and almost had a Sabbath, and that he reduced the ceremonies of worship to the most severe simplicity.* Tertullian, also, testifies that he forbade entirely the use of images, and for the first hundred and seventy years of the state there was seen at Rome neither picture nor statue of God. The wide difference between this religion and that of the Greeks, of which we have been speaking, in connection with the corresponding difference in the character of the people, is worthy of notice. Changes were afterwards made in the religion of Numa. But its fundamental principle, that the gods direct the affairs and watch over the conduct of men, that they hate vice and reward virtue, remained for a long period fixed in the national mind ; and while it remained, it exerted an influence over the morals of the people which could not have been secured in any other way.

Sallust, in describing the corruptions of later times, writes thus : “It is worth while, when you have observed the houses and country-seats built up like so many cities, to examine the temples of the gods erected by our ancestors, the most religious of men. But they adorned the temples of the gods with piety, and their own houses with glory.”

*Plutarch represents Numa as a disciple or friend of Pythagoras. Livy, on the other hand, thinks the report of the acquaintance of the Roman sage with the Greek philosopher a gross error. Distance of time and place, he says, are both opposed to its truth. The Chronological objection, if well founded, would be conclusive. But neither the authority of Livy, nor even that of Polybius, whom he followed, is sufficient to settle the question.

Polybius affirms that the greatest superiority of the Roman political constitution consisted in their belief respecting the gods. The influence of religion, he says, both over individuals, and in the affairs of the state, was carried to the highest possible extent. This he thinks was not done by chance or in vain. On the contrary he regarded the men of his own age as having rejected their views of the importance of religion, without reason, and to no good purpose. In proving this, he omits, he says, other instances of their good effects, and mentions only one. It is this: "If among the Greeks those who manage the public funds are entrusted with but a single talent, it is impossible by employing ten notaries, as many seals, and double the number of witnesses, to secure fidelity ; while the Roman magistrates who handle a large amount of money, discharge their duty faithfully, through the single obligation of the oath. Thus, while in other states it is a rare thing to find a man who has not laid hands upon the public treasure, among the Romans it is seldom that any one is convicted of such a crime."

The principles from which originated the lustre of the Roman name, and the boundless extent of the Roman conquests were *domestic morality, love of country, and the fear of the gods* ; these three, and the greatest of these was the last. It was the bond and security of the others, and therefore the grand procuring cause of all the results of the combination. While reverence for the gods remained, freedom and public happiness continued to be enjoyed, even without the diffusion of

knowledge to more than a very limited extent. But when religion declined, morality declined with it.—When the fear of the gods was weakened, morality gave way before the violence of passion, and patriotism was displaced by private interest. And when the Epicurean philosophy began to remove all faith in the gods, and they ceased to exist in the estimation of the people, morality and patriotism perished with them.—When scepticism became prevalent ; when Cæsar could assert that death is an eternal sleep, and Cato could approve ; when Seneca could say “No one is any longer so much a child, that he must be shown that there is no Cerberus, or Tartarus ;” what then was the state of morals ? Those were the times when Jugurtha, as he departed from Rome, having often looked back upon it in silence, at length broke out in these remarkable words : “A city set up for sale, and soon about to perish, if only a buyer can be found”—a prediction that was speedily verified. In conjunction with the poets and philosophers, such statesmen as Lucullus, Catiline, Crassus, Clodius, Anthony, Pompey, Cæsar, and Augustus, were the men who corrupted the morals, and subverted the liberties of their country. Theirs were characters produced by a sceptical period. They were men who, like Napoleon, carried their hearts in their heads. They were men who, for the most part, rejected all belief in future retribution, and even future existence, and denied the very being of a God. Or if at any time the terrible goadings of conscience vanquished their unbelief, we see them

giving way to the grossest superstition. For strange as it may seem, the rankest scepticism and the extreme of superstition appear to be next door neighbors.

The results of this shifting combination of unbelief and superstition, which followed the subversion of the religious belief of the early Romans, may be briefly summed up in Seneca's description of his times. "All is full of criminality and vice ; indeed much more of these is committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of abandoned wickedness is carried on. The lust of sin increases daily ; and shame is daily more and more extinguished. Discarding respect for every thing good and sacred, lust rushes on wherever it will. Vice no longer hides itself. It stalks forth before all eyes. So public has abandoned wickedness become, and so openly does it flame up in the minds of all, that innocence is no longer merely rare, but has wholly ceased to exist." Could such a state as this be free ? A civil despotism, with the mockery of a senate and of freedom, had already usurped the seat of Liberty, soon to be displaced by a military domination still more terrible. And the remaining history of the Empire is a continuous record of atrocities, in number and enormity as much exceeding any similar developments of depravity, which the black scroll of humanity exhibits, as the theatre on which they were performed was grander and more magnificent than any other, which has displayed its pageantry before the eyes of men.

When the state of morals in the Roman empire was such as has been described, let me ask whether any amount of knowledge, any degree of intellectual cultivation, could have turned back the tide of corruption, and saved the nation? This question is partly answered by facts. At the time when morality and liberty went down together, the people had more knowledge than ever before. Through the virtues of their ancestors, which religion produced, the Romans became the masters of the world. But when they discarded religion, and took science in its stead, did knowledge preserve their liberties? They were the successors of the Greeks in power, and, although themselves the conquerors, submitted to be taught by those whom their arms subdued, and adopted as their own the Grecian learning. Thus a people whose ancestors, though virtuous and free, had been by no means distinguished for intellectual cultivation, became possessed of treasures of foreign knowledge.

In the time of Quintilian, it appears that the sciences were taught to the Roman people: "Even among our country people," says that writer, "there are but few who do not know, or desire to learn, something respecting the natural causes of things." The common soldiers in the army of Crassus were able to read amatory romances. Did the increased strength of patriotism, and the more general prevalence of morality go hand in hand with the diffusion of knowledge among the people? *Just the reverse.* For the striking fact which we may observe in the history of Athens, is true

also of Rome. The period of morality and liberty was the period of comparatively little intellectual cultivation ; while knowledge, crime, and political insecurity are found to have been co-eval. But suppose the Roman system of education to have been ever so defective. At that period when the prophecy of Jugurtha was literally accomplished, and the empire was set up for sale by the Pretorian guards, and struck off to the highest bidder, who would seriously imagine that those evils in the state, which had reduced the empire to this deplorable condition, could have been remedied by imparting either to the people, or the soldiers, or to both, a greater amount of knowledge ? Could the operation of the causes, which had brought about this state of things, have been in this way even retarded ? Had there been in every village a printing press, a lyceum, and half a dozen public schools ; had the gratuitous lectures on the arts and sciences been as able, and the amount of their influence as important, as they were at Athens, or as they are in our own country at the present day ; whatever changes may have been produced in regard to particular events, and in respect to the *manner* in which the empire fell, there is not the least reason to suppose that the certainty of its ruin would have been at all diminished. From a close inspection of the whole history of the Roman people, nothing can be clearer than that *education*, in the restricted, and erroneous, but too common sense, intellectual cultivation—the diffusion of knowledge among the people—was with them neither the source, nor preserver, of

public morality and free institutions. It was not knowledge that formed the noble character of the early Romans, but it was the Roman character that secured the acquisition of whatever amount of knowledge the exigencies of the state might require. As knowledge was not the procuring cause of morality, so neither had it power when that cause was removed by the overthrow of religion, to secure the perpetuity of freedom.

I have stated that Governor Everett, of Massachusetts, has referred to the recent history of France, as showing the connection of knowledge with morality and liberty. But the events appealed to appear to me to furnish a very different lesson from that which this distinguished man has adorned with the charms of his well known eloquence.

Every where in the early periods of French history we see the burstings forth of the spirit of Liberty.—The prerogatives of the crown, however, were gradually increased, till Louis XIV became one of the most absolute sovereigns in Europe. For its magnificence, and for its effects on liberty, his reign has been compared to that of Augustus. It may, also, in some respects, be called the Augustan age in reference to learning. The arts and sciences flourished, literature was patronized, but liberty was utterly annihilated.—And during the long reign of his tyrannical successor, the people, groaning under the weight of an immense despotism, galled by the odious tyranny of the nobility, and stripped of the remnant of their earnings by a cor-

rupt and intolerant hierarchy, were preparing for a political and moral explosion that shook all Europe, and threatened to convulse every nation on the globe. And when, in the reign of Louis XVI, the day of terrors came ; when the nation, goaded on by the blind fury of passion to more than parricidal madness, murdered their king, desecrated the sabbath, outlawed religion, publicly denied the existence of a God, and ended by cutting each other's throats ; were these scenes of their history, at which humanity shudders, owing only to a want of knowledge among the people ? Was ignorance the cause of all the enormous atrocities of the French revolution ? If so, then, as we gaze with a shudder of inexpressible horror on the executioner, while, amidst the acclamations of the people, he holds up the dripping head of a yielding and conciliatory monarch ; as we follow the open cart of the condemned queen, and see her with bared head, amidst the brutal shouts of the populace, turning her eyes for the last time towards the magnificent dwelling of her happier days, and then with dignified composure submitting to the sentence of infuriated faction ; in fine, as we view the play of that infernal instrument, which for so long a period poured forth an uninterrupted torrent of blood ; with cool self possession we may say, 'Mistaken men ! This is not the road to national prosperity !— And now indeed our indignation would well nigh be roused against you, did we not know that you have been misled. But brethren, "We wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." Alas !

for the deficiencies of intellectual cultivation ! alas for the want of lyceums and public schools ! alas for another page of geographical instruction ! for one more problem in Proportion, for still another lesson in the Roots ! So should your peace be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea !'

But is it so ? Is it only necessary to enlighten the eyes of the public ? Is it only necessary to point out to the people the true way to private happiness and public prosperity, and is it so absolutely certain that they will walk, yea, run with joy therein ? If it is asserted that the French nation was inflamed to that pitch of mad infatuation, which led to such a series of excesses, of secret assassinations, mid-day massacres, public executions, general confiscations, furious intestine broils, and at length to foreign wars, and through unnumbered perjuries of faith, to universal, but transitory and dearly bought conquests, merely for want of knowledge among the people, simply because the people did not know their true interests ;—if this be asserted, it may be asked how was it with their leaders ? Were they gentle and harmless as the new born lamb ? How did it happen that their rulers, whom they freely and wittingly chose, should have been so deceived ? How was it with the members of assembly, selected from all France, mostly from the liberal professions, certainly not with an entire disregard of talents and information ? 'But they had interests to serve. They had private ends to gain.' True, and so had all the infidels who directed the councils, and the desperadoes who

commanded the armies of the Republic. ‘But the interests of these men were different from those of the people.’ True, but were they their real interests?—Was it truly for their good to plunge thousands, and perhaps millions, into misery for a temporary gratification? If not, how does it appear that a knowledge only of their true interests is needed by the people, in order that they may be induced to follow them? If, while the lewd fellows of the baser sort plunge headlong into low and beastly vice, the educated and refined prosecute upon a larger scale their cool designs of unmingled selfishness, what security is there that the common people, when their intellects shall have been rendered equally acute, will not pursue the same pernicious course of individual gratification?

The first cause of the French Revolution was, no doubt, evils in affairs of state; the despotism of the monarch, and the oppressions of the privileged orders. But if the reason of its being attended, and followed, by such terrible excesses be asked for, I answer that it was not the want, but the abuse of knowledge. It was the corruption and annihilation of religion, and not the want of a diffusion of knowledge among the people, that produced these excesses. The French infidels of that period formed societies in almost all the countries of Europe, and flooded every hamlet and village with their doctrines. Those doctrines were, says Dr. Dwight, “That God is nothing; that government is a curse, and authority an usurpation; that civil society is the only apostacy of man; that the possession of property is

robbery ; that purity and natural affection are mere prejudices ; and that assassination, poisoning, and other crimes, are not only lawful, but even virtuous." The diabolical object of these societies of Illuminati, as they called themselves, seemed to be nothing less than the universal spread of infidelity, atheism and anarchy—the conversion of the whole political and moral world into an undistinguishable chaos. And what followed was, not to one city, or one nation merely, but to the whole civilized world, in very truth the reign of terror ! Those were the times in which there was "Distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking for those things which were coming on the earth." Had they succeeded to the extent of their wishes, the earth would have been converted into an immense slaughter house, slippery with blood and pollution, and groaning with the weight of her slain.—But here we may pause and say, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth !" Yea, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice !" For, after the true character and tendency of these pernicious principles had been fully developed, and made plain, by the destroying agencies which they had put in motion ; after these agencies had commenced a rapid, and seemingly irresistible career of havoc and desolation, and had filled with carnage and covered with sackcloth, nearly half the globe ; after they had crimsoned every stream, from the torrid regions of the Nile to the frozen fountains of the Volga, with the blood of more than five

millions of men ;—it pleased the Lord, in mercy to the world, to turn back this scourge of nations. And France, the source and seat of this destructive pest, has ever since resembled the burning crater of Krabla ; whose volcanic power, having formerly poured devastation and ruin over all the adjacent plain, has found itself at last by an omnipotent energy circumscribed within its native limits, and which, pent up between its smoking and sulphureous walls, still vomits up its black and boiling flood ; no longer, indeed, to flow forth, bearing death upon its bosom, but to fall reluctantly back upon itself, and thus furnish a spectacle of terror to the horror-struck spectator who may view it from the surrounding heights above. These are the fruits of national immorality ; and that is the legitimate offspring, not of ignorance, but of infidelity and atheism. France is still the crater of a spent moral volcano, whose accustomed work no man can say shall not to-morrow be renewed.

By way of deduction from the subject which has been exhibited, I make in conclusion this remark. *Education sanctified by the Gospel is the only hope of Freedom.* This position, regarded as an inference from the arguments already adduced, I might consider as established. But I will refer to one more fact, which may serve to illustrate and enforce it. The question is, in what way can such a national character be secured, as will give permanence to civil liberty ? Is this to be done by intellectual education, by lyceums, and scientific tracts, by the diffusion of “Useful Knowledge,” or in

some other way? The Scotch character is strongly marked. Its features are intelligence, morality, industry, economy, love of order. To these qualities, which exist among the lower classes, is superadded in the higher ranks, great intellectual power, and extensive learning. What formed this national character? 'The common schools of Scotland,' would be the usual answer. But let us hear the testimony of Dr. Chalmers.

"It is not scholarship alone," he says, "but scholarship impregnated with religion, that tells on the great mass of society. We have no faith in the efficacy of mechanic institutes, or even of primary and elementary schools, for building up a virtuous and well-conditioned peasantry, so long as they stand dissevered from the lessons of Christian piety. There is a charm ascribed to the scholastic system of Scotland; and the sanguine imagination is, that by importing its machinery into England and Ireland, it will work the same marvellous transformation there, on the character of their people, that was experienced amongst ourselves. But it is forgotten, that a warm and earnest Christianity was the animating spirit of all our institutions, for generations after they were formed, and that, wanting this, they can no more perform the function of moralizing the people, than skeletons can perform the functions, and put forth the faculties of living men. The scholastic, is incorporated with the ecclesiastical system of Scotland, and that not for the purpose of intolerance and exclusion, but for the purpose of *sanctifying education, and plying the boyhood of our land with the*

lessons of the Bible. The scholarship of mere letters might, to a certain extent, have diffused *intelligence* among the people ; but it is mainly to the religious ingredient that the moral greatness of our peasantry is owing.”

‘This is the true theory for the education of the people. It is only such an education that will secure morality, and therefore it is on this alone that free institutions can find a permanent and solid basis.

Let no one suppose from the tone of this discourse, that I am opposed to the education of the people, and the spread of knowledge through the community. Far from it. Such a sentiment it would certainly be extremely inconsistent for one in my station to advance. Against learning and science I would be the last to utter a word ; for I admire, and reverence, and love them both. But I protest against the *deification of knowledge*. I protest against an exclusive dependence on intellectual cultivation for the improvement of society, and the security of freedom. I protest against the dismemberment of education, and the separation from it of that religious element, which can alone sanctify and perfect the whole.

It is because the Institution to whose interests I have devoted myself is founded on different principles from those against which I have been reasoning, that I have the highest hopes of its usefulness. It is a religious institution. It originated with religious people. It is the child of the church. It has the ministers of religion for its founders and its patrons. It has religious teach-

ers ; and one of its grand objects is to send forth young men prepared to preach the Gospel in our country and the world. To such an institution, and to no other, am I willing to give my best days, my strongest efforts, and my warmest prayers. And if I have succeeded in establishing the position advanced, the reason is obvious. For it is only religious education which can give security to public virtue, and permanence to civil liberty.

If the principles which have been advocated in this discourse have any soundness, we may see the folly of those statesmen and philosophers, who imagine that a nation may continue in a prosperous condition, without the restraints of religion. "Sooner," says the pious Plutarch, "might a city stand without ground, than a state maintain itself without a belief in the gods. This is the cement of all society, and the support of all legislation."

The men of politics may scramble for office, and divide the spoil ; the men of mere science may grasp after honor, and secure the wreath of fame ; but to us, my Colleagues, in connection with others who are training the youth of our country on the same principles, and with all the ministers of the Gospel, belongs the nobler work of staying the progress of political and social corruption, and saving the nation from destruction, by infusing into the mass of public morals the leaven of educated piety.

There undoubtedly is pith in the elements of American character. But that character is marred by self-conceit. We are neither so good, so learned, nor so

wise, as the office-seeking demagogues who annually applaud us, would persuade their hearers to believe. With exulting confidence, we have sounded the victor-note of freedom, and proclaimed the success of "the great experiment." We have refused to tolerate even so much as the whisper of a doubt whether the proof is yet complete, that "the people are capable of governing themselves." But the curtain of futurity now hides from the eyes of men approaching scenes of unwritten history, in which we are to be actors, that must excite throughout the world the deepest interest of the friends of human happiness. Shall the rising of that curtain discover to their view a mournful spectacle of fraternal discord? The watchword "Liberty and the rights of man!" uttered with firmness by the pious fathers of our freedom, bound *their* ranks together.— Shall the same watchword, when shouted vociferously forth by a progeny of degenerate, irreligious sons, array as deadly foes brother against brother, and father against son, east against west, and north against south, slave against master, and master against slave, and amidst the shock of arms, and the massacres both of a civil and a servile war, overthrow our institutions and drench the land in blood? If this shall *not* be, the means of preservation will be found, neither in the spread of "Useful Knowledge," nor the cultivation of intellectual refinement, but in THE ASSIDUOUS INCULCATION OF MORAL PRINCIPLE, AND THE RESTRAINING POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.